



BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
Small Business Roundtable



## **SMALL BUSINESS** ROUNDTABLE

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Government | October 2012



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# Small Business Roundtable Members



**Sue Adams**  
Managing Partner  
Beverdale Enterprises  
WHISTLER



**Shachi Kurl**  
Director  
Provincial Affairs for BC  
and Yukon for CHB  
VANCOUVER



**Mark Startup**  
President and CEO  
Shelfspace - The Association  
for Retail Entrepreneurs  
VANCOUVER



**MaryAnne Arcand**  
Executive Director  
Central Interior  
Logging Association  
Chair, Carbon Offset  
Aggregation Coop.  
PRINCE GEORGE



**David Littlejohn**  
Professional Campground  
Operator  
Living Forest RV Park/  
Oceanside Campground  
NANAIMO



**Ian Tostenson**  
President and CEO  
British Columbia Restaurant  
& Food Services Association  
VANCOUVER



**John Cameron**  
CEO  
Rock Solid Business  
Coaching Inc.  
LANGLEY



**Kelly McCormack**  
Owner  
McCormack Management  
BURNS LAKE



**Sonia Virk**  
Lawyer and Partner  
Joomratty and Virk, Barristers  
& Solicitors  
SURREY



**Cindy Choi**  
Partner  
Chan Choi & Company  
VICTORIA



**Cybele Negris**  
Vice-Chair  
Small Business Roundtable  
President and Co-Founder  
Webnames.ca Inc.  
VANCOUVER



**MJ Whitemarsh**  
Consultant  
Whitemarsh Enterprises Inc.  
BURNABY



**Robert Fine**  
Executive Director  
Economic Development  
Commission of the  
Central Okanagan  
KELOWNA



**Coralee Oakes**  
Executive Director  
Quesnel & District  
Chamber of Commerce  
QUESNEL



**Chief Judy Wilson**  
Neskonlith Indian Band  
(Skatin)  
CHASE



**Garth Frizzell**  
Founder and CEO  
Tera Cognita Software  
Systems Inc.  
PRINCE GEORGE



**Murray Presley**  
Senior Partner  
Presley & Partners  
COURTENAY



**John Winter**  
President and CEO  
British Columbia  
Chamber of Commerce  
VANCOUVER



**Shafiq Jamal**  
Vice President  
Western Canada Retail  
Council of Canada  
VANCOUVER

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# A Message from the Small Business Roundtable

As part of an on-going mandate to serve the best interests of small business, the Small Business Roundtable Board has the opportunity to champion the interests of small businesses across the province through its 7th Annual Report to Government.

In this report, the Roundtable is pleased to provide information on its continuing involvement with such programs as BizPal, LiveSmart BC and Junior Achievement BC, consultations with the small business community, discussions with Aboriginal business leaders, and endeavours such as the Venture Connect program and "B.C.'s Most Small Business Friendly Community Award".

Recommendations to both government and the small business community included in this report address many issues facing today's small business community. This includes a diminishing work force, the need for training and knowledge sharing to assist with seamless succession planning, and the need for planned strategies for the use of technology by small business to ensure best value for investment.

Two of our inaugural members, Linda Larson and Laura Jones, have retired from the Board. During the six years they served on the Board, they made significant contributions to both the success of the Small Business Roundtable and to the small business community. We thank them for their contributions and wish them continued success.



**Linda Larson**



**Laura Jones**

This year, we are pleased to welcome three new members to the Board: MaryAnne Arcand, Shafiq Jamal, and Shachi Kurl, who come to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

We are pleased to have the Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Small Business, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and Kevin Krueger, MLA, Kamloops-South Thompson as Co-Chairs for the Board. The Roundtable will continue to fulfill its mandate by listening to the needs of small businesses and championing their interests, as well as providing guidance, support and recommendations to government on potential strategies that will help the small business community thrive and expand.

*The Small Business Roundtable Board*

# Our Purpose

## What is the Small Business Roundtable?

Established in 2005, the Small Business Roundtable provides small businesses in British Columbia with a permanent voice in government through its mandate of:

1. engaging in a dialogue with small business to identify key issues and opportunities,
2. developing recommendations to government and to small business owners on strategies to enhance B.C.'s small business climate, and
3. advocating for small business interests in the province.

Co-Chaired by the Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Small Business, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and MLA, Kevin Krueger (Kamloops-South Thompson), the Small Business Roundtable Board consists of 19 recognized leaders within the small business community.



**Number of Small Businesses by Region, 2011**

Region	Population <sup>1</sup>	# of Small Businesses
1. Vancouver Island/Coast	785,315	68,400
2. Mainland/Southcoast	2,763,628	223,100
3. Thompson-Okanagan	539,030	51,800
4. Kootenay	152,833	14,700
5. Cariboo	162,775	12,900
6. North Coast and 7. Nechako	99,136	7,000
8. Northeast	70,604	6,700
British Columbia	4,573,321	385,100 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Source: BC Stats, Regional Population Estimates and Projections (2011 data)

<sup>2</sup>Statistical source: Small Business Profile, BC Stats, 2011

<sup>3</sup>Figures do not add to the total because the provincial total includes some businesses for which the region is unknown

## Who do we represent?<sup>2</sup>

The Small Business Roundtable represents small businesses across British Columbia. "Small Business" is defined as a business with fewer than 50 employees, or self-employed without paid help.

- 98 per cent of all businesses in British Columbia are small businesses.
- Small businesses provide nearly 56 per cent of all private sector jobs, employing over one million people.
- Almost 55 per cent of the total value of goods exported from the province is generated by small businesses.
- Small businesses are responsible for approximately 29 per cent of British Columbia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



# B.C. Small Business Success Stories

Over the past year, small businesses have continued to provide employment and support to their communities, despite the ongoing economic challenges.

The drive and determination of small business owners is admired throughout the Province of British Columbia as they continue to provide a solid foundation for our economy.

In this year's report, the Roundtable is pleased to recognize eight of those diversified small businesses.

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## Seeds Natural Food Market

[www.seedsfoodmarket.ca](http://www.seedsfoodmarket.ca)



When Tina and Jim Willard-Stepan moved to Cumberland in 2005, they were struck by the absence of local grocery stores in the community. Three years later they opened Seeds Natural Food Market, a full-service, green grocery store offering organic, natural, and locally grown and manufactured food at a reasonable price.

"My work background was teaching, coaching and non-profit management," Tina says. "The learning curve was steep, but I've always had a passion for food, so that made it easier."

Seeds offers food from local growers and food manufacturers – it purchases all of its products from as small a radius as possible while keeping its prices in line with the larger grocery stores.

Seeds' website, [www.seedsfoodmarket.ca](http://www.seedsfoodmarket.ca), boasts the names of over 50 local producers and farms which provide the goods with which Seeds stocks its shelves.

"We would like to continue to be of service and help build sustainability for the broader small business community of Cumberland," Tina says. "And, of course, we want to keep having fun!"

Seeds is plastic bag-free and offers boxes, paper bags and reusable 'loaner' bags to customers. They also recycle, donate or compost 95 per cent of all the waste produced by their store, generating less than half of a standard garbage bag of waste each week. Seeds is also home to a World Community Film Library and children's play area – offering much more than just groceries. Seeds was presented with a Cumberland Chamber of Commerce customer service award in 2009, was a Small Business BC Best Employer awards finalist in 2011, and was nominated for a 2012 Community Impact Award.

"My favourite moments in the store are when I look up from my desk to see an impromptu meeting happening in front of the broccoli, much like you would experience at a Farmer's Market," Tina says.



*"We would like to continue to be of service and help build sustainability for the broader small business community of Cumberland."*

# Meeting our Mandate

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

Over the past year, the Roundtable engaged in a variety of activities to support small business, and is pleased to report on some of the initiatives undertaken in response to issues voiced by B.C.'s small business community. Here are some of the highlights from this past year.



## 1. Small Business Roundtable Consultations

Since its inception in 2005, the Roundtable has held 52 consultations throughout the province providing an opportunity to discuss issues and opportunities with small business owners. At the time of this publication, consultations for this past year have been held in Vancouver, Port Alberni and Tofino.

Further details on these consultations can be found at:  
[www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca)

## New West Gypsum Recycling

[www.nwgypsum.com](http://www.nwgypsum.com)

Even though New West Gypsum Recycling has been operating for over 25 years, it is still considered a 'sunrise' business since the industry is still relatively new.

Owners Tony and Gwen McCamley founded their business in 1985 after gypsum wallboard – also known as drywall – was banned from Metro Vancouver landfills.

"We set about finding a way to deal with this waste," Gwen says, "and now people in the gypsum wallboard manufacturing industry tell us we are 20 years ahead of our time."



With seven recycling facilities in North America and Europe, New West Gypsum has diverted 1.5 million tonnes of gypsum waste from the landfills in B.C. and 4 million tonnes worldwide.

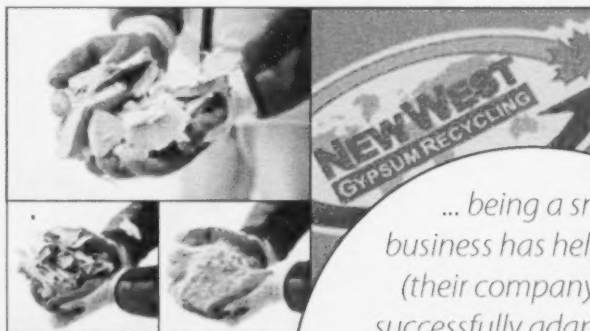
Gwen says they have received a variety of items at their sites throughout the years.

"We have received enough unwanted material to furnish a house," she says. "A sofa, a toilet complete with seat, a bed, several mattresses, a computer and a television – to name just a few things."

Despite their international success, Gwen says being a small business has helped their company successfully adapt to changes in the industry. With 15 plant employees in B.C., plus transport and office support staff, New West Gypsum focuses on giving its customers high quality, personal service.

"Our customers are very proud that they recycle," Gwen says. "Recycling is the right thing to do now for our children's future."

New West Gypsum Recycling Inc. is the world leader in the recycling of wet and dry waste gypsum wallboard/drywall/plasterboard from new and renovation construction sites, manufacturing plants, wholesalers and applicators.



*... being a small business has helped (their company) to successfully adapt to changes in the industry.*



## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business Is Being Heard*

### 2. Aboriginal Small Business Meeting

In 2009, at the suggestions of Chief Judy Wilson, the Roundtable began to hold annual Aboriginal Small Business Meetings. Many Aboriginal business owners live in remote communities. By holding separate Aboriginal sessions, the timing and location of meetings can be set to accommodate broad participation of Aboriginal representatives to ensure we benefit from their unique perspectives.

In January 2012, the Roundtable held its third Aboriginal small business meeting in Vancouver. The meeting was hosted by the Roundtable's Co-Chair, MLA Kevin Krueger, and was attended by approximately 60 people from around the province, including community leaders and business operators.

The Board was honoured to have Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs participate in this full-day meeting.

The themes identified during this meeting will assist the Roundtable in developing recommendations to promote a strong, vibrant small business sector for Aboriginal entrepreneurs across British Columbia. These themes included:

- top challenges facing Aboriginal small business owners,
- partnership opportunities with non-Aboriginals,
- regulatory burdens facing Aboriginal small businesses,
- training requirements for Aboriginal small business development and success,
- improving communications with the Aboriginal small business community, and
- actions to enhance small business in Aboriginal communities.

HuStream  
www.hustream.com



Kelowna-based HuStream Technologies Inc. was founded by Peter Matejcek in 2008 with the goal of providing a better way to communicate with online audiences through video. The bustling company of six employees boasts clients like Intel, Lenovo and Microsoft.

"We make websites more effective by blending web optimized video with web pages to create exceptional user experiences," Peter says. "To put it simply, we inspire people to stay on your website longer."

HuStream's videos offer clients a more interactive, social media-friendly way to tell their stories.

"When you web optimize your video, you make the experience easier for the web visitor," Peter says. "The result is they will stick around a lot longer. We are the Internet glue that combines video with website content resulting in exceptional online experiences."

As he looks ahead, his vision for his company is to be a world leader in web optimized video to create more effective websites that hold people's attention. A highlight of being an Okanagan-based small business is being a part of a growing community of technology companies. Peter says watching his business grow, and seeing his team collaborate and create something from nothing, makes his work worthwhile.

"Every customer wants to improve their website so it's more engaging," Peter says. "That's the number one lesson we've learned from our clients."



*Peter says watching his business grow and seeing his team collaborate and create something from nothing, makes his work worthwhile.*

## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### 3. Junior Achievement BC (JABC)

Providing business training and awareness to youth in our schools (K-12) continues to be a key issue raised during small business consultations. Such training prepares our youth to enter the business world and to become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.



JABC is a well-respected organization successfully delivering business training in our schools for many years. The Roundtable strongly supports JABC, and contributes to its success by having a Roundtable member sit on JABC's Board of Directors.

The Government of B.C. has clearly understood the necessity of preparing our youth for a business career, and has provided JABC with a \$1 million grant. This grant will help ensure that future generations have better access to business skills, have the information needed to consider an entrepreneurial career choice, and are better prepared to enter the labour force.

<http://british-columbia.jacan.org/>



## Kootenay Knitting

[www.kootenayknitting.com](http://www.kootenayknitting.com)

Cathy Rella founded Kootenay Knitting Company Ltd. 15 years ago in the basement of her family home. Using a hand-operated knitting machine, the first high quality and distinctive headbands and toques were created. Today, Kootenay Knitting is an international brand worn by Canadian Olympians.

Based in Cranbrook, Cathy says people identify their knitwear with the lifestyle that the Canadian Rockies provides: world-class recreation surrounded by breathtaking scenery.

"Our product fits with our surroundings," Cathy says. "It's inspired by the landscape in terms of the design and what we produce. It's about as Canadian as you get – it's coming out of the heart of Canada."

Kootenay Knitting was an Official Licensee of headwear, scarves and sweaters for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver and also supplied the Hudson's Bay Company with hats for the 2006 Olympic Games in Torino. A high point in the company's history was when television broadcasters Ron MacLean and Karin Lee Gartner both wore their Kootenay sweaters on air during the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games.

Kootenay Knitting has now expanded its collections to include the following brands: Get Red, a souvenir collection featuring a felt maple leaf appliqué; Rella, a fashionable knit accessory collection; Canadiana, a lifestyle collection of knits and apparel; and the Pink Mitten Campaign, which is raising money for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation by donating \$1.00 for each pair of mitts sold.

"This fall, we are producing limited edition, made-in-Canada products geared for the niche souvenir market," Cathy says. "We're the little company that could – and we're pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve."

Kootenay Knitting has come a long way since its humble start in the basement of a Cranbrook home!



*"We're the little company that could – and we're pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve."*

## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard

### 4. Mobile Business Licence Video

The Roundtable fully endorses the B.C. government's efforts to encourage local governments to adopt a Mobile Business Licence, also known as an Inter-Community Business Licence. This licence reduces the time and cost for mobile businesses, such as plumbers, electricians and caterers, operating across municipal boundaries.

There are currently six mobile business licence agreements in place:

- ▶ Okanagan-Similkameen: 19 communities
- ▶ Greater Victoria: 13 communities
- ▶ Trail area: 5 communities
- ▶ Cowichan Lake area: 4 communities
- ▶ North/West Vancouver area: 3 communities
- ▶ Courtenay/Comox: 2 communities

This year, the Roundtable members actively advocated for local governments to adopt a mobile business licence. The Roundtable contributed funds to develop and launch a promotional video explaining the benefits of the licence. The video and related information are available on the Small Business Roundtable website at:

[www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca)

### 5. Competitive Tax Environment

Reinstating the PST will present major challenges for the small business community which was just beginning to realize the benefits of a harmonized sales tax.

The Roundtable has urged the government to ensure that clear, timely information is made available as quickly as possible, that known PST irritants are addressed, and that efforts are made to provide support to the business community during this transition. Information on the reinstatement of PST is available at the following website:

[www.PSTinBC.ca](http://www.PSTinBC.ca)

LiveWorkPG

[www.liveworkpg.com](http://www.liveworkpg.com)



Shauna Harper moved to Prince George from the Lower Mainland over three years ago for its better cost of living and to have more time with her children. At the time, she felt that she needed to use the Internet to attract more clients for her business, which focused on coaching creative entrepreneurs. She ended up learning how to leverage the Internet to attract clients globally. With this knowledge, her business has grown, innovated and re-invented itself in ways she never imagined.

"Moving here forced me to learn all about online marketing, Google Algorithms and how to better use Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to build relationships," Shauna says. "Now I have a toolbelt of skills to have my business help the community of Prince George use the Internet and technology to build relationships."

Two years ago Shauna started LiveWorkPG, a company which teaches other local companies how to use the Internet to market their businesses. She now has five employees and has worked with the Prince George Airport, the Prince George Art Gallery and the Otway Nordic Centre, among others.

LiveWorkPG uses online marketing techniques to help businesses strategically use the Internet to build relationships with their clients. Her business is also branching off into enterprise social networking, a way of helping companies use social media tools to create a brand culture their employees want to be a part of.

Prince George offers Shauna a community of seasoned entrepreneurs who welcome you with open arms, mentorship and an abundance of financial incentives.

"You can walk into a Chamber of Commerce event and be at the same table as a brand new entrepreneur and a multi-millionaire business person," she says. "This community is so down-to-earth and humble." Looking ahead, Shauna wants to continue pushing the boundaries of what her company offers:

"I am constantly looking for ways to combine the energy of the youth in Prince George with the wisdom of seasoned entrepreneurs."



"I am constantly looking for ways to combine the energy of the youth in Prince George with the wisdom of seasoned entrepreneurs."



## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### 6. LiveSmart BC: Small Business Program

The LiveSmart BC: Small Business Program was developed in partnership with BC Utilities, industry associations, and other B.C.-based small business operators. As part of its mandate, the Roundtable was pleased to provide input on the design of this program, which has proven to be very successful.

The Roundtable has been advised that small businesses participating in the program's first year of operation have saved \$6 million in electricity costs, enough to power more than 6,200 homes for one year. The program has directly created 95 jobs across the province, and has achieved 91 per cent of the estimated three-year electric utility savings. The Roundtable continues to provide advice to government on potential enhancements to the program.

[www.livesmartBC.ca/](http://www.livesmartBC.ca/)

### 7. BizPaL Program Expansion

Initially implemented in Kamloops in 2004, BizPaL is a free and intuitive on-line tool that produces a customized list of required federal, provincial, and municipal permits and licences pertaining to a business' specific location.

Over the past year, the Small Business Roundtable Board has actively promoted BizPaL, encouraging more local governments to adopt the tool as a means of reducing the cost and complexity of doing business in the province. As a result, BizPaL is now available in 112 communities across B.C. Information on BizPaL is available at:

<http://BCbizpal.ca>

## Skeena Valley Expeditions

[www.skeenaValleyExpeditions.com](http://www.skeenaValleyExpeditions.com)

When Hatha Callis visited Terrace in 2005 as a heli-skiing guide, he stumbled upon a business opportunity using the region's world-class rivers.

"There was a good opportunity at the time as the cruise ships were beginning to come into Prince Rupert," Hatha says. "Somehow it just made sense to use the amazing rivers here to put smiles on peoples' faces and create amazing experiences."

In 2006, he founded Skeena Valley Expeditions: a boutique river rafting company that takes groups of adventurers down the Tatshenshini River – the planet's largest protected area that ventures through the Yukon, B.C. and Alaska. It also holds permits to guide day trips near Terrace, and expeditions on the Babine River, dubbed the river of grizzlies; a fitting name as Hatha encountered nine grizzlies on one particular journey.

Hatha says he's learned that being a small business owner means wearing several hats at once.

"You have to become an accountant, a graphic design artist, a human resources specialist, a salesman, a risk manager, a mechanic and, for me, a river guide. If you don't do it, or ensure someone else does it, no one is there to pick up the pieces and be sure it gets done."

Hatha says he loves having a small business and his long-term vision is to keep it that way. He is comfortable with what his company offers and proud to deliver a high quality, unique experience.

"We believe our customers think so too, because they keep returning for more," he says.

Skeena Valley Expeditions won the business excellence award for tourism from the Terrace and District Chamber of Commerce and employs 15 staff seasonally. The company has been featured as one of the "Top 10 Adventures in the World" on the Forbes Traveller website, and in *Outside* and *Explore* Magazines.



*"... being a small business owner means wearing several hats at once."*



## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### 8. B.C.'s Most Small Business Friendly Community Award

The Small Business Roundtable was again pleased to recognize those communities making an effort to foster the growth and success of small businesses through the second annual "B.C.'s Most Small Business Friendly Community Award."

The award is available to one community within each of the eight economic regions of the province. It highlights and celebrates the efforts of local governments in supporting small business in their communities.

Submissions are evaluated on measures undertaken by the local government to enhance the small business climate by:

- reducing regulatory barriers,
- enhancing small business competitiveness,
- recognizing small business' contributions to their community, and
- climate action initiatives that support small business.

#### The winners for 2012 are:

Region 1 (Vancouver Island / Coast)	<b>Nanaimo</b>
Region 2 (Mainland/Southwest)	<b>N. Vancouver District</b>
Region 3 (Thompson – Okanagan)	<b>Kamloops</b>
Region 4 (Kootenay)	<b>Nelson</b>
Region 5 (Cariboo)	<b>Prince George</b>
Region 7 (Nechako)	<b>Smithers</b>



***Congratulations to  
all of the winners!***

## C.O.B. Bike Shop

[www.cobbikeshop.ca](http://www.cobbikeshop.ca)

Gabe Newman and Dave Percy, two passionate mountain bikers, founded C.O.B. Bike Shop in 2008. C.O.B. stands for Children of the Bluff: the Bluff is a popular biking area for enthusiastic riders in Smithers.

"We love bikes for so many reasons, including health, freedom, fun and camaraderie. In particular, we wanted the camaraderie that exists in the bike community to extend into and permeate the shop. We had so much help with the renovation, it felt like the shop belonged to everyone when it was finished."

Now in its fifth year, Gabe says that in addition to feeling the benefits of owning a sustainable and profitable business, they are seeing more people attend their biking events.

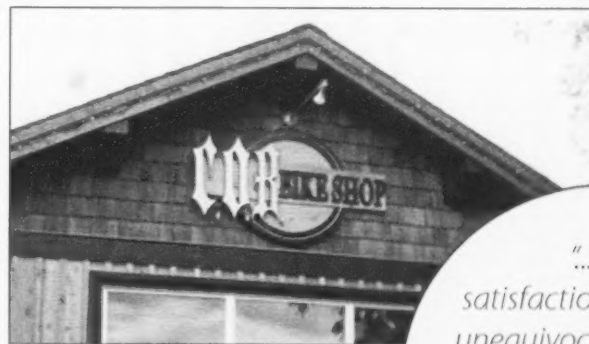
Looking ahead, Gabe and Dave want to expand to better serve the needs and wants of their customers. For instance, Gabe is a physiotherapist and would like to offer more detailed bike fitting and injury prevention services through the bike shop. Customers often inquire if the owners can complete mechanic, coaching and trail guide services, and they would like to be able to provide those services in the future.

Both owners say the most-surprising aspect of being a small business owner is the time commitment.

"Nothing truly prepared us for the amount of work that was required to create a small business from scratch," Gabe says. "Luckily, the satisfaction is unequivocally gratifying."

C.O.B. has made connections with other inspiring small business owners, partnering with the local tattoo artist, health food store, potter, welder and charities to offer products and put on events.

When asked what she's learned from her clients, Gabe says they've taught her that building a business is about building relationships that are based on universal core values: trust, respect, education and quality.



*"...the  
satisfaction is  
unequivocally  
gratifying."*

## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### 9. Small Business Training Projects

#### 9.1 Venture Connect Pilot Project

Business succession planning continues to be a key issue for the small business community. As the population ages, many small business owners are moving into retirement and simply closing their doors. This affects the whole community. The business owner loses financially by not selling the business, and the community loses a viable business.

This year, the Roundtable was pleased to contribute funds to Venture Connect Inc., a unique pilot project aimed at assisting small business with succession planning. Additional funding was provided by B.C.'s Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, Island Coastal Economic Trust, and six Community Futures partners.

Venture Connect Inc. provides preparation and matching services to business sellers and potential buyers. These services, available throughout Vancouver Island and the Island Coastal Region (including Powell River and the Sunshine Coast), include:

- transition and succession planning,
- price determination and business valuation,
- staging consultation and coordination,
- introduction services for immigrant buyers,
- do-it-yourself transition templates, and
- links to compatible supports and services.

Coordinating suitable matches between these parties results in a smoother transition of ownership, reduces the cost impact to the business, and decreases the stress levels for employees and owners on both sides of the transaction.

Information on this program is available at:

[www.ventureconnect.ca](http://www.ventureconnect.ca)

## Peacebuilder Mediation

[www.peacebuildermediation.com](http://www.peacebuildermediation.com)

After practising law in Dawson Creek for 25 years, Wayne Plenert was ready for a new chapter in his career. He founded Peacebuilder Mediation in 2005 as an experiment to see if a law practice based around alternative dispute resolution could succeed in a small town, rural setting.

"I believe strongly that conflict is natural and normal, that most learning comes from conflict," Wayne says.

Peacebuilder's motto is Creatively Confronting Conflict. Wayne's clients range from families to construction companies, tackling everything from custody battles to pipeline disputes. He is also frequently called upon to mediate in the Alberta Peace River region.

Wayne says his proudest accomplishment is helping countless people in the North resolve major conflicts, while simultaneously developing tools to positively transform their lives.

"Instead of a custody battle, they have a parenting plan. Instead of being ordered to pay money, they have a workable financial arrangement," Wayne says. "Instead of fighting their social worker, they are now on the same page in fighting drugs or their personal demons. Whatever the challenge, they have transformed their own way of understanding their situation, and are working with, instead of against, those with whom they were conflicted."

Wayne runs his business from his family home and often travels to the place of conflict, instead of having people travel to him. He says people are good at seeing the crisis in conflict, but not the opportunity. And that's a perspective he'd like to change.

"I do what I love, for people I respect, at times when they really need help," he says. "I have learned that most people, when given a chance, will look for and discover creative and thoughtful solutions to their problems."



*"I have learned that most people, when given a chance, will look for and discover creative and thoughtful solutions to their problems."*





## Meeting our Mandate (cont'd)

*The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### 9.2 BC Chamber of Commerce Skills Training for Micro-Business Pilot

The need for basic business training for small business owners is frequently cited as a major barrier to the growth and success of small business. The Roundtable is pleased to note that the Province has responded to this issue by granting \$3.1 million to the BC Chamber of Commerce for a pilot project focused on micro-business owners with no formal training beyond high school.

Under this project, small business owners with fewer than five employees can access up to \$1500 to work with training experts to upgrade their skills in a number of areas, including accounting principles, marketing, leadership, and human resources management. Information on accessing this program is available from your local Chamber of Commerce, or on the following website: [www.BCchamber.org](http://www.BCchamber.org)

### 10. Reducing the Regulatory Complexity for Small Business

Excessive regulation creates competitive barriers for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and can impede their growth and innovation, which is critical to creating a vibrant, self-sustaining economy.

The Roundtable strongly supports British Columbia's Regulatory Reform Program, which is focused on reducing red tape and making it easier to do business with the province. British Columbia has become an international leader in regulatory reform, having reduced its regulatory requirements by 42 per cent since 2001, and undertaken numerous regulatory streamlining projects to reduce the regulatory burden on business and citizens.

This year, British Columbia became the first jurisdiction to legislate a requirement to produce annual public reports of its regulatory reform initiative. The first report, released in June 2012, clearly outlines the government's commitment to enhance the life of all British Columbians by reducing red tape, making government information more accessible to its citizens, and inviting citizens to participate in finding solutions. A copy of the report is available at: [www.straightforwardBC.ca](http://www.straightforwardBC.ca)

### 11. Small Business Month

To celebrate the critical contributions of small business to their communities and to the provincial economy, October has become Small Business Month in British Columbia.

Small Business Month provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contribution our small businesses make to our economic, social and cultural well-being. Participation in events celebrating small business has been growing province-wide.

Last year's events included Small Business BC's Open House, during which MLA Kevin Krueger presented the organization with a framed proclamation commemorating Small Business Month 2011. A calendar of events celebrating this year's Small Business Month is available at:

[www.smallbusinessBC.ca](http://www.smallbusinessBC.ca)



**MLA Kevin Krueger presents the 2011 Small Business Month Proclamation to Small Business BC's George Hunter**

# Recommendations to Government

The Small Business Roundtable acknowledges that the B.C. Government's current economic strategy, set out in ***Canada Starts Here: The BC Jobs Plan***, aligns with economic concerns we have heard from the small business community. See: [www.BCjobsplan.ca](http://www.BCjobsplan.ca)

The following recommendations are ways the government can further support the small business sector, thereby strengthening the economic foundation of the province and providing an environment where small business can flourish.

## Recommendations to Help Further Small Business Development

### 1. Strengthen Partnerships

- Provide a voice to the small business community through continued consultations and obtain regular feedback for consideration when developing government policy and programs.
- Continue to encourage small business to make use of the ***LiveSmartBC*** program in conjunction with the provincial government's mandate to counteract climate change.

### 2. Endorse Training Programs

- Continue to provide funding to ***Junior Achievement BC*** and cultivate an on-going business learning environment within our schools.
- Provide training dollars based on business sectors or manufacturing clusters.
- Identify potential mentoring partnerships for new entrepreneurs and provide assistance to those seeking to establish mentorship programs.
- Encourage activities that foster positive views on how small business is seen by the youth work force.
- Offer clear and specific guidance on required adjustments resulting from the change in tax systems from HST to PST and GST.



## Recommendations to Government *(cont'd)*

### Recommendations to Lessen Regulatory Burdens for Small Business

#### 1. Promote Collaboration to Streamline Regulations

- Provide programs to local governments that recognize and reward them for their contributions in reducing the regulatory burden placed on small businesses, such as **B.C.'s Most Small Business Friendly Community Award**.
- Expand the profile of British Columbia's regulatory reduction achievements through social media and electronic communication systems, in addition to the customary reporting processes.
- Continue to encourage local governments to participate in the **Mobile Business Licence** (Inter-Community Business Licence) to reduce cost and time for small businesses working across regions and provinces.

### Recommendations to Promote Small Business Expansion

#### 1. Maintain Programs to Provide for Gaps in Resources

- Continue assisting remote areas in identifying training programs that align with regional specific workforce needs. Expand the **Regional Workforce Tables Initiative** to bring together the most vulnerable regions in the province and brainstorm local solutions to fill labour needs.
- Promote programs such as **Venture Connect** to ensure communities retain a viable business base.
- Endorse programs and seminars offered through **Small Business BC** and affiliated organizations that provide guidance and strategies to entrepreneurs at all business phases.



#### 2. Support Remote and Rural Opportunities

- Renew commitments to improve transportation and communication infrastructure in remote areas to attract and retain new employees.
- Commit to major projects in the regions and collaborate with local governments to ensure small business owners in remote and rural areas have access to opportunities in their regions.



## Recommendations to Government *(cont'd)*

### 3. Promote Cultural Diversity in Recruitment

- Continue to endorse programs that support hiring from across all resource pools, including international, Aboriginal and physically challenged to promote cultural diversity.
- Advocate for business support service centres that champion Aboriginal businesses such as the **First Citizens Fund** and other business and entrepreneurship skills training programs.
- Continue to modernize immigration practices to meet the needs of the labour market.

## Recommendations to Help Small Business Capitalize on New and Existing Technology

### 1. Contemplate All Required Technologies for Productivity and Operations

- Introduce programs to rural areas providing them with the technology to work effectively and be competitive.
- Maintain existing technologies for electronic information sharing, such as video-conferencing. Not all areas of the province have access to high-speed Internet technology.
- Encourage small business to increase productivity by investing in new technologies, innovations, training and ideas.



### 2. Investigate New Communications Methods

- Develop methods to include a wider range of participants through technology when in-person participation is not possible.
- Provide methods for feedback by the small business community through social media, web site interaction and/or interactive "town hall" meetings.

# Recommendations to the Small Business Community

Small businesses in B.C. continue to be a driving force in this province's economy. Widely recognized issues are emerging that must be addressed to allow today's entrepreneurs to thrive and expand.

Some of these issues include a steadily decreasing skilled workforce, an influx of new technologies, and increased competitiveness due to Internet capabilities. Many businesses that were once limited to their regions are now thriving on a global scale.

These recommendations highlight potential actions for small businesses to help them expand and develop.

## Suggestions for Business Planning

### 1. Start Up

- Find mentors who are suited to your type of business interests. Invite them to share their knowledge and guidance and use their information as a source for sound business decisions.
- Contact all available resources in your community as well as on-line to make use of free programs, training and networking opportunities.
- Establish a sound business plan that includes financing, expansion, recruitment, risk management and an exit or succession plan.

### 2. New Markets

- Consider whether exporting and/or importing will enhance your business and provide the expansion you're seeking.
- Branch out into larger markets using web-based technology to reach potential customers across the globe.

### 3. Succession Plan

- Well before retirement, decide whether you will close your business, sell it or pass it on to a family member.
- Determine what requirements will be necessary for a smooth transition to save unnecessary costs for all parties involved.
- Provide the required training in anticipation of changes to ownership of your business.





## Recommendations to the Small Business Community *(cont'd)*

### Suggestions for Economic Strength

#### 1. Tax Credits

- Invest in shares of a registered venture capital corporation or eligible business corporation and claim a **Venture Capital Tax Credit**.
- Investigate your eligibility for the **BC Training Tax Credit** provided by the province for employers and apprentices who are engaged in an apprenticeship program administered through the **Industry Training Authority**.

#### 2. Cost Savings

- Investigate possible savings by performing aspects of your business electronically or through social media.
- Investigate how to reduce your company's energy expenses through such programs as **BC Hydro's PowerSmart Program** and/or **LiveSmart BC: Small Business Program**.
- Reduce accommodation costs where possible through location sharing, electronic file management to decrease storage, and staff "work from home" programs. Real estate comprises a sizeable amount of small business expenses.

### Suggestions for Team Building

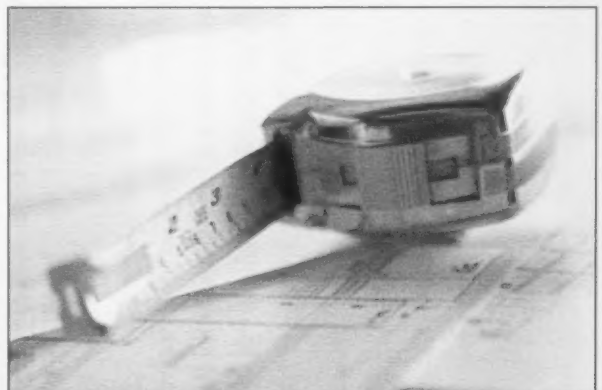
#### 1. Employee Training

- Empower your organization by offering training to your staff to further their career development, and complement your retention strategies.
- Participate in the **SkillsPlus** program whose primary function is to support the development and delivery of customized, effective curriculum and assessment tools to meet the human resources training needs of British Columbia's small and mid-sized businesses.



#### 2. Management Training

- Attend free seminars provided either through your local communities or by **Small Business BC** to maintain and update your business expertise.
- Attract and retain talent by encouraging staff to undertake professional development projects and roles with industry and professional associations.
- Determine if you qualify for courses to improve business capability through the **BC Chamber of Commerce Skills Training for Micro-Business Pilot**.





## Recommendations to the Small Business Community (cont'd)

### 3. Recruitment

- Use co-op programs and internships for hiring to reduce payroll costs in exchange for relevant work experience and mentorship.
- Expand your organization's cultural diversity by hiring from "non-mainstream" groups including Aboriginals, immigrants, seniors and those with physical challenges.
- Market your company to the younger workforce through job fairs, high schools, youth clubs and organizations.
- Expand your company's appeal with strategies such as flexible work hours, benefit programs and work from home opportunities.

### Suggestions for Competitiveness

#### 1. Technology

- Invest in new equipment based on your business requirements. Consider all options, including the frequency of updates to specific models and the costs to maintain them.
- Consult subject matter experts to determine best value for investment on new computer products and services to enhance productivity and security.
- Increase productivity and improve operations through the use of cost-effective and/or user-free technology.

#### 2. Community and Social Awareness

- Explore new business opportunities by participating in community events.
- Expand your networks by attending city council meetings, or joining and participating in the activities of local business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, non-profit organizations or boards of trade.
- Provide formal and informal mentoring relationships both within your field of expertise and as a general business owner through such programs as **Junior Achievement BC**.
- Review global influences to determine potential impacts on your business and identify any changes that may be required to accommodate them.

#### 3. Communications

- Connect with the Roundtable by participating in small business consultations in your community. Your input helps facilitate changes for competitive business strategies.
- Maintain a current and up-to-date web presence to guide potential customers to you.
- Use social media to monitor public feedback, build relationships with potential and existing customers, and broadcast your message to a new and diverse audience.
- Communicate your needs to government through your local member of the Legislative Assembly, Member of Parliament, and Mayor and Councillors.



# Our Commitments Moving Forward

The Roundtable will continue to fulfill its mandate by:

- engaging in dialogue with the small business community through consultations and participation in local small business activities,
- keeping current with existing and emerging small business issues,
- advising on, and supporting, government programs that deliver value to the small business community,
- seeking ways to champion the interests of small businesses throughout the province, and
- supporting small business interests in the government policy development process.

# Resources to Assist Small Business

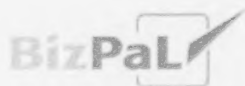


BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
Small Business Roundtable

[www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca)



<http://british-columbia.jacan.org>



Business starts here

<http://bcbizpal.ca>

BCeID

[www.bceid.ca](http://www.bceid.ca)



[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)



british columbia  
FORUM FOR WOMEN  
ENTREPRENEURS

[www.fwe.ca](http://www.fwe.ca)



[www.absn.ca](http://www.absn.ca)



[www.livesmartbc.ca/incentives/small-business](http://www.livesmartbc.ca/incentives/small-business)



THE BC  
JOBS PLAN

[www.bcjobsplan.ca](http://www.bcjobsplan.ca)



[www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)

WorkBC

Employment Services Centre

[www.workbc.ca](http://www.workbc.ca)



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